

"THE TREATMENT OF COUNTRY LIFE  
in the  
ELIZABETHAN DRAMA."

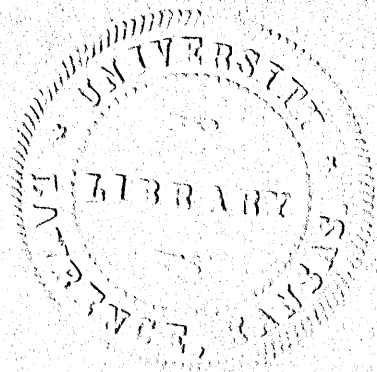
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of  
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## INTRODUCTION

This study is the result, first, of reading for a Master's thesis, and, second, of an ever increasing interest in the rise of the common people. The development of democracy among the English people, as reflected in literature, has been traced in drama, in verse, and in fiction from the restoration period to the present time; but little has been written concerning the treatment of lowly life in the Elizabethan period. For the suggestion of this theme as a thesis subject I am indebted to Myra Reynolds of the University of Chicago. I chose the drama for my field, first, because the Elizabethan period was the greatest productive dramatic period in all literature; and, second, because the drama, especially comedy, reflects so accurately the customs and the race consciousness of the age. As my study was confined to one semester, Professor Johnson of the University of Kansas suggested that I limit my subject to the treatment of only one class of common people - the rustics. After reading the plays it seemed advisable to enlarge the scope of my subject to include all classes of country people. As there are few country gentlemen in the plays, however, my thesis is still chiefly concerned with a study of lowly life.

The amount of material in the plays is very limited for three reasons: First, the dramatists had inherited the tradition of Aristotle's<sup>1</sup> aristocratic idea that only kings, people of court, or great heroes were suitable characters for tragedy; that common people were not capable of strong tragic experiences; so we naturally find scant treatment of

1. Aristotle's Poeticus XIII,2. XV,8.

rustic life in the Elizabethan tragedy. Second, the Elizabethans lacked a genuine interest in nature; they were obstinate lovers of the town,

"Let savage beasts lodge in a country den,

We would see towns, and manners know, and men."

This expresses their general dislike for the country. Except for an artificial interest in pastoral scenes and for the conventional, classical nature references, nature is seldom mentioned. The development of appreciation of nature is almost parallel with the growth of democracy. Third, the Elizabethans were not interested in common people and especially in the rustics. The court was the centre of English life; therefore the country was almost excluded from the drama. As most of the dramatists depended upon royal patronage, they presented plays which were of greatest interest and entertainment to the court.

This dissertation is an attempt (1) to determine the attitude of the Elizabethans toward the country people; (2) to find what development took place in this attitude from the time of the early dramatists, 1550, until the death of Shakespeare, 1616;<sup>1</sup> (3) to discover a species of rustic drama with country setting and country people as the principal characters; (4) to analyze the authors' point of view and determine whether they spoke of the country as a critical observer, with an air of sarcasm or with genuine interest; (5) to learn something about the rustics, them-

1. Several of Shakespeare's contemporaries continued to write plays after 1616 which are included in this study.

selves, their customs and habits, their intellectual and spiritual life.

For the biographical material and a general survey of the Elizabethan period I am indebted to the lectures of Professor W. S. Johnson of the University of Kansas and his course in the History of the Drama. I am especially grateful to Professor Johnson for advice and suggestions in my seminar work.

# CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PLAYS

1550-53	Gammer Gurton's Needle	Stevenson
1584	Gallathea	Lyly
1588-92	The Pinner of Wakefield	Greene
1589-90	Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay	Greene
1590	The Old Wives Tale	Peele
1590	Mother Bomble	Lyly
1593	Edward I	Peele
1594	Life and Death of Jack Straw	Danter
1598	Every Man in His Humour	Jonson
1599	Every Man Out of His Humour	Jonson
1599	Two Angry Women of Abington	Porter
1600	Grim, the Collier of Croydon	Anon
1603	A Woman Killed With Kindness	Heywood
1604	The Wise Woman of Hogsdon	Heywood
1606	Wily Beguiled	Anon
1607	Michaelmas Term	Middleton
1607	A Trick To Catch The Old One	Middleton
1608	A Mad World My Masters	Middleton
p 1608	The Merry Devil of Edmonton	Anon
1612	The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl	Tailor
1613	A Chaste Maid in Cheapside	Middleton
1614	Albumazar	Tomkins
1614	Bartholomew Fair	Jonson
1617	The Fair Maid of the West	Heywood
1623	The Witch of Edmonton	Dekker
p 1633	A Tale of the Tub	Jonson
p 1638	The English Traveller	Heywood
p 1640	The Sad Shepherd	Jonson

STEVENSON ?

"Gammer Gurton's Needle" is the first attempt to present a picture of contemporary rustic life in the form of a regular drama. It is rather singular that the second English comedy to use the classical Roman form should draw its material at first hand from observation of country characters. The date and author of the play are not definitely known. It was printed in 1575 and on the title page are inscribed these words: "Played on the stage not longe ago in Christes College in Cambridge, Made by Mr. S. Mr. of Art." The leading spirit in dramatic activities in Cambridge at that time was William Stevenson, who is considered by many critics to be the author. The date of composition is placed between 1550 and 1553. Other critics ascribe the play to John Still. Who the author was is not of great importance to this paper; the play remains as the sole survival of vernacular college comedy and vivid picture of country life in the sixteenth century.

The scene is laid in a small village and the various village types are represented in a realistic way. The theme is a very trivial one - the search for a needle which Gammer Gurton lost while mending the pants of Hodge, her servant. Complications arise when Diccon, the bedlam, makes Gammer believe that her neighbor, Dame Chat, has stolen the needle; and he persuades Dame Chat that she has been accused of stealing Gammer's rooster. The village priest is called to settle the dispute. He is induced by Diccon to enter

Chat's house by stealth to see if she has the needle. In the meantime Dame Chat has been warned by Diccon that Hodge is coming to steal her chickens, so she waits for him in the dark and gives the man a good pounding, under the impression that he is Hodge. The curate's pride, as well as his head, is badly wounded; he summons the bailiff to punish the offenders. Diccon is suspected of his intrigues, and peace is restored by Hodge finding the lost needle in the patch on his pants. The plot is original and unusual with no traces of the stock figures of Latin comedy.

The characters are delineated with freshness and vigor. Gammer Gurton and Dame Chat are capital studies from the life of village gossips - a type which still survives. They have some elements of a shrew and were no doubt influenced by Mrs. Noah of the miracle plays. Altho they are capable fighters with words as well as with fists, they forgive as readily as they became angry. Hodge, whose name became the conventional designation for the English farm laborer, is an equally life like figure. Diccon is another character from actual life. "No doubt he was an expatient of Bedlam Hospital in London, discharged as being supposed to be cured, who wandered about too featherbrained to be set to useful work, but was a welcome guest in cottage houses."<sup>1</sup> He shows no sign of insanity but is irresponsible and a mischief maker. Mr. Rat is a humorous, half-satiric picture of a country parson. His weakness for drink and disposition for laziness are frequently mentioned. He can always be

1. Gayley's Eng. Comedies p. 203.



found at the best tavern in town with a cup of ale in his hand and a crab roasting in the fire. Not love but the fear of losing a tithe prompts him to help his people. He increases their respect for him by talking "so sage and smooth as tho he were a scholar." His important place in the community is shown by the fact that the villagers send for him to settle all kinds of questions. He says he is called "If once her fingers end but ache." As Dr. Rat is the representative of the spiritual authority of the place, Master Baily is the representative of the temporal authority, the bailiff. He is more intelligent, more merciful and helpful than Dr. Rat to whom he says, "Master Rat, you must both learn and teach us to forgive."

"All the characters except the curate and the bailiff who belong to the educated class, and Diccon, who may be presumed to have come down from a better social station than that of the village people, use a kind of speech which is clearly intended to represent the dialect of the southwestern counties, which dialect became the established convention of stage rustics thruout the Elizabethan period. Shakespeare's rustics mostly use the southwestern forms and not those current in the poet's native Warwickshire."<sup>1</sup> There are several distinguishing peculiarities of this dialect: the old iche (=I) is reduced to ch in "cham", "chal", "chould", I am, I shall, I should; V is frequently used for f, "vylthy", "vast", "Vaters"; y is used for i, "fayre", "pryched." The

1. Gayley's English Comedies p. 204.

author attempts to make the dialect realistic by a limited vocabulary, by coarseness and oaths. "Gogs soule", "gogs bones", "gogs hart", "gogs sydes", "gogs sacrament", "gogs bread", "gogs malt" are favorite asserverations.

There are a number of realistic details. Hodge enumerates his favorite articles of diet, "onyons, fleshe, fyshe, bacon, ale."<sup>1</sup> He adds a homely touch by telling Diccon that the cat "had licht the milk pan so clene, 'twas not so well washed this seven yere."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Rat, before crawling thru a hole into the hen house says, "Are you sure Diccon the swil-tub stands not here?"<sup>3</sup> The humour in the play consists of comic situations, coarse but lively scenes, rough conversation and original plot.

"Gammer Gurton's Needle gives a realistic picture of an English village. The author was evidently acquainted with village life, for the play is too vivid in detail to be the mere observation of a city man. Altho there is considerable buffoonery there is no sarcasm. The country people are strong, happy, simple, natural men and women, living in a community where every one knows everyone else, so that it is quite natural that quarrels should arise. The beginning of rustic drama was well made in this "homely" play free from the conventions and artificialities of city life.

1. G.G. Needle, Act II, Sc. I, l 13.
2. Ibid Act II, Sc. I, l 25.
3. Ibid IV, II, 140.

# LYLY.

John Lyly belonged to the University Wits who stood for culture and taste. He was born in Kent in 1554 but spent most of his life in London where he died in 1606 - a disappointed place seeker. As he wrote for the court circle and appealed primarily to the refined, cultivated classes, it is very natural that he should give us a refined and idealized picture of country life. Of his eight plays two are placed in the country: "Mother Bombie", a comedy of everyday life and "Gallathea", a pastoral comedy.

"Gallathea" was written in 1584 in prose. It is a pleasing picture of an imaginary pastoral Lincolnshire tenanted by pagan deities and nymphs. No attempt is made to present real country scenes or people. The people who live the life of woodland simplicity have the evident culture and refinement of court. The chief importance of Gallathea for this study is the fact that the setting is in England, designated and limited to Lincolnshire. This gives a local touch not found in Lyly's other pastorals. Conventional pastoral names, "Tyterius, Melebus, Gallathea, Phillida", are used except for the characters of the comic sub plot of the three shipwrecked brothers - Raffie, Roben, and Dick-, and an alchemist and his boy Peter.

For his one play of contemporary life written in 1590, Lyly chose a scene in his own country, Rochester in the country of Kent. In "Mother Bombie" he abandons mytholog-

ical, allegorical or highly idealized treatment for a more realistic one. The play depends upon the involved intrigue. Two wealthy old men, Memphis and Stellio, each ignorant of mental defects in the other's child, scheme to cheat each other into matching their two children, Accius and Lilena. Two other men Sperantius and Priscius, opposing the union of their son and daughter, Candius and Livia, scheme to marry them to the foolish children of their wealthy neighbors. The pages or servants of all four fathers are acquainted with the schemes. They fool their masters and aid Candius and Livia to marry. Forgiveness is secured and the marriage of the two fools is prevented by the discovery that they are the children of an old nurse Vicinia, who changed them at birth for the rich men's real offspring, Maestius and Serena. Mother Bombie is a "wise woman" to whom the different characters resort for advice and who prophesies in popular doggerel the actual issue in each case.

As the play is one of intrigue rather than a play of character development there are few references to the country. Memphis is an avaricious old man who lives in Rochester and has a house in the country. Stellio - a wealthy husbandman, Priscus - a fuller, and Sperantius - a farmer, are neighbors in the same village. A very realistic touch, true of any class of society, is the parents' dotage on their children's achievements and ability. Sperantius is proud of his son's education and ability to speak Latin, while Priscus admires and praises his daughter's beautiful embroidery representing

flowers, animals and trees. The servants, Halfpenny, Lucio, Dromio, and Rescio are clever, witty fellows who speak Latin and are noted for their puns. They are not typical village servants. In fact Lyly does not differentiate his country people from his city people, nor does he give us any description of country life.

The language is more realistic in *Mother Bombie* than in any of Lyly's other plays. He is not cramped by his rigidly artificial style; Euphuism is well nigh gone. In its place we have a style in which characterized dialogue is more possible and more evident. He suggests the superiority of prose to verse as the expression of comedy. There is no dialect; the rich, the poor, the servants use the same language.

The author is neither satiric nor sympathetic. Altho he uses a village for the setting of his play, the people could be city folk just as well as country folk as far as their language, education, humor and general characteristics are concerned. Lyly idealized all classes of society. No where in his plays did he show a genuine interest in the rustics for what they were; he pictures them as they were in his dreams, in his imagination. There is no realism nor coarseness; all is idealism and refinement.

## GREENE

Robert Greene showed a finer appreciation of English country life than any writer before Shakespeare. It is difficult to account for the humanitarian strain in a man who belonged to the University Wits and had the reputation of being an Italianated Englishman. He was born about 1556 in Norwich and after a very sordid career, poverty stricken, he died in the house of a shoemaker in London in 1592. In spite of his life, his works are freer from grossness than most of his contemporary play wrights. He always retained a strong love for the country where two of his six plays largely have their setting; moreover he was the first dramatist to show real genuine interest in the rustics, themselves. His attitude is always favorable and sympathetic, never satiric. In both "The Pinner of Wakefield" and "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" the country people are favorably contrasted with the court people.

"The Pinner of Wakefield" is one of the best studies of characteristic English country life of the Elizabethan period. The setting is at Bradford and Wakefield. For the first time in the drama a country man, a yeoman, is made the hero of a play in which there are noblemen and kings. George a' Greene is an apotheosis of English Yeomanry. The Earls and Lords sneer at him at first but plead for their lives before they leave him. They seem weak and puny in comparison with George a' Greene and his townsmen. He has nothing but bitter scorn for the leaders of the insurrection

against King Edward. To Lord Bonfield he says: "A poor man that is true is better than an Earl, if he be false."<sup>1</sup>

George a' Greene's patriotism for his king and his love for Bettris form the theme of the story. Grim, the father of Bettris, wishes her to marry Lord Bonfield and keeps her imprisoned until his return. George's boy, Wily, disguised as a seamstress visits Bettris in her prison, and she escapes in his clothes and flees to George. In the meantime George assumes the guise of a fortune teller and meets three traitors. He reveals his identity and in open combat kills Sir Gilbert and takes the other two Lords prisoners. King Edward hearing of the fame and patriotism of George a' Greene goes to Bradford to meet him. Here the King vails his staff to George a' Greene and offers to make him Knight. But George proud of being a countryman refuses the offer and says,

"Then let me live and die a yeoman still,  
So was my father, so must live his son  
For 'tis more credit to men of base degree  
To do great deeds, than men of dignity."<sup>2</sup>

The only boon George asks is permission to marry Bettris which the King grants with the consent of her father, Grim.

The country characters are presented with spirit and gusto. Greene, the Pinner, is delineated quite admirably. His fidelity to his sovereign, his sympathy, his bluff,

1. Act II, Sc. III, L 465.

2. Act V, Sc. I, L 1195 ff.

hearty geneality are notable in his speech to the King,

"Tho we Yorkshire men be blunt of speech and little skilled in court or such quaint fashions, yet nature teacheth us duty to our King."<sup>1</sup> He shows his justice and humanity in naming the ransom for King James of Scotland.

"Then let King James make good

Those towns which he has burned upon the borders:

Give small pension to the fatherless,

Whose fathers he caused murdered in those wars,

Put in pledge for these things to your grace,

And so return."<sup>2</sup>

Bettris is a splendid type of woman - a noble woman in the truest sense of the word. In all respects she is a suitable wife for the Pinner. The flattering remarks of Lord Bonfield do not move her in the least: she remains true as steel to George a' Greene. Both are characters highly idealized. They speak in blank verse and show no realism in their language.

Jenkin, servant to George a' Greene is characterized by simplicity, rusticity and uncouthness; he belongs to the clown type. He is in love with Madge, the souce-wife, and has as a rival a rustic of similar occupation, Glim, the sow gelder. These characters speak in prose. Jenkins blunders in his language mistaking "rivals" for "rider."<sup>3</sup> In general, little attempt is made to represent rustic dialect or diction. The general treatment of the servants is humorous. The play was popularized by the use of the folk

1. Act V, I, 1090

2. Act V, I, 1207

3. II, III, 370



legend of Robin Hood; this added a historic touch to the local interest. Robin Hood, his men Much and Scarlet, and Maid Marian are treated conventionally.

The play has no description of English Scenery but contains several realistic country references. A wheat field is called "a close of wheat." George a' Greene was a Pinner whose business it was to impound or pen up cattle. The "souce-wife" was a woman who sold souce made from the head, feet and ears of swine boiled together and pickled. (Souce is still made by country people.) The country fare is twice mentioned as being a "piece of veal hung up since Marthemas," "wafer cakes your fill," and mutton.<sup>1</sup> "Vailing the staff" was an old country custom in Bradford. No one could pass a superior with his staff on his shoulder. The King recognizing George's worth vailed his staff to him. This shows the author's deep love and respect for the Pinner of Wakefield, a man from the lowly ranks of life, a rustic. It is the first attempt to show that true greatness and nobility of character are found, in common people. This strain of humanitarianism is in a different key from the buffoonery of the first rustic drama, "Gammer Gurton's Needle", which appeared fifty years earlier.

One of the plots in Greene's "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" shows the same sympathetic treatment of rustic life. The scene, Fressingfield, is the same world as Wakefield. The country air seems to blow thru the play which in many respects is more realistic of the country life than "The

1. V, I, 997.

Pinner of Wakefield."

The theme of the plot is the love of a nobleman for the lowly born but beautiful Margaret. Lacy, the agent of Love, becomes the lover as in Shakespeare's Henry VI. Margaret falls in love with him at first sight and refuses Prince Edward. Because of her reserve and modesty she admits the fact to no one but herself.

"Disclose not that thou art in love

And show as yet no sign to him."<sup>1</sup>

Her strong womanly intuition perceives the difference between Lacy, disguised in country apparel, and the farmers' sons at the fair because of Lacy's "witty words quickened with smiles," his "courtesy smelling of the court," and the ease and gracefulness of all his acts. Unlike many other country girls, Margaret is not to be fooled by city rakes. Prince Edward explains that fact to his courtiers.

"For - why our country Margaret is too coy

And stands so much upon her honest parts

That marriage, or no market with the maid."<sup>2</sup>

Thruout Margaret is idealized. This daughter of the Keeper of Fressingfield, a woodsman, is just as much at ease with the court circle as in her homely cottage with the rustics. Princess Elinor, who marries Prince Edward after Margaret refuses him, is proud to have "Fair Margaret Countess to the Lincoln Earl" attend upon her, and calls her "the lovely star of Fressingfield."<sup>3</sup>

1. Sc. III, 75

2. Sc. I, L. 118

3. Sc. 15 L. 28.

In fact Margaret possesses all of the desirable qualities in a woman - beauty, purity, honesty, modesty, quickness of intellect and dignity. As George a' Greene is an ideal man springing from country soil, so Margaret is an ideal woman coming from the same rank of society. In all ways she far surpasses the Princess Elinor.

The other country characters are of minor importance. Two country squires, Lanbert and Serlshy, fight a duel over Margaret and are both killed. Thomas and Richard, farmer boys at the Harlston Fair, speak in prose. Altho there is no dialect, their vocabulary is limited and their topics of conversation are strictly of local rustic interest; eg.

"If this weather holds we shall have hay good cheap, and butter and cheese at Harlston will bear no price."<sup>1</sup>

This play is a unique mixture of realism and idealism. Miles says he is as "serviceable at a table as a sow is under an apple tree;"<sup>2</sup> while Lambert describes his -

"Meads invironed with silver streams

Whose batling pastures fatneth all my flocks,

And lands that wave with Ceres golden sheves."<sup>3</sup>

The blending of idealism and realism is very evident in Prince Edward's description of Margaret,

"Into the milk house went I with the maid

And there amongst the cream bowls she did shine

As Pallas 'mongst her princely housewiferie.

She turned her smocks over her lily arms

And dived them into milk to run her cheese."<sup>4</sup>

1. Sc. 3, L. 2

2. Sc. 9, L. 213

3. Sc. X, L. 55f.

4. Sc. I, L. 80 ff

Greene is noted for his fidelity to English scenes and English life. His plays of rustic coloring helped to diminish the influence of the court upon the popular stage. Mr. Shelling says: "A conscious tinge of local color was not a distinctive feature of earlier English drama. In Fleay's list of plays prior to 1584 there is no one local English title to be found such as the later 'Pinner of Wakefield,' 'The Merry Devil of Edmonton.' This description of locus with all that it involves marks a growth from the abstract to the concrete, which is one of the characteristics of the development of the Elizabethan drama".<sup>1</sup> Greene's contribution to rustic drama was, indeed, great. He added to Lyly's idealization a sympathy and a humanitarian love for country people. There is no buffoonery or satire. His women are of a superior type distinguished for their freshness, purity and nobleness. His plays have the buoyancy, health and freedom of the country.

1. Shelling's Elizabethan Drama. Vol. I, p. 498.

PEELE

Very little is known of the life of George Peele. It is conjectured that he was born about 1558 and records show that he was dead in 1598. He is realistic, never sarcastic, in the treatment of the common people owing to his own temperament and, probably, to the fact that he lived, at one time, in Devonshire, and all thru life knew what poverty was. In spite of his pauperism and dissolute life he was always lighthearted and possessed a quick wit. With Lyly and Greene he belonged to that illustrious group known as the University Wits.

The only treatment of country folk in his eight plays is found in "The Old Wive's Tale" written in 1590. The home spun opening scene in the cottage of Clunch, the smith, forms a sort of induction, altho it is intricately connected with the play which follows. The latter might be called a play within a play similar in construction to "The Knight of the Burning Pestle."

Three court pages, Antic, Frolic and Fantastic, having been lost in the woods are found by Clunch and taken to his cottage where they have "house room and good fire to sit by altho", as Clunch says, "we have no bedding to put you in."<sup>1</sup> His wife, Madge, makes them welcome and gives them "a piece of cheese and pudding of her own making."<sup>2</sup>

1. L. 42

2. L. 52

Then while a crab is roasting, Madge tells a tale of two brothers losing their sister and finding her at last in England. She merely starts her tale when actors come in and play the story before them. The background of this tale is the folk lore of Peele's own day which makes a fitting tale for the old wife to tell.

There is a certain realism about the opening scene which is different from and finer than anything I have found before this; the small cottage of the smith; the dog welcoming his master home; the homely and generous hospitality of Clunch and Madge; the crabs roasting in the fire; and the smith's remarks as he retires early, "They that ply their work must seek good hours."<sup>1</sup> Clunch and his wife are so happy that even the antics notice it, "This smith leads a life so merry as a King with Madge his wife."<sup>2</sup> Woman-like Madge always considers and remembers the food. At the close of the play within the play, after the actors have made their exeunt she says, "We will have a cup of ale and toast this morning and so separate."<sup>3</sup>

Peele blended romantic drama with realistic diction and setting. By realistic diction I do not mean the dialect of the rustics; Clunch and Madge speak in plain English but it smacks of cottage and field. There is as much difference between the realism of dialect of Hodge in "Gammer Gurton's Needle" and Peele's Madge or Clunch as between the exaggerated "hayseed" in the comic paper and the finer drawing in

1. L. 110

2. L. 62

3. L. 876

one of George Eliot's peasants. Peele freed his play from the euphuistic and rhetorical devices of Lyly and did much to refine and supple the diction of the drama. In other words the realistic element is more notable than the decorative.

Another example showing that Peele did not attempt to make his characters use their natural dialect is the character of the Farmer in his chronicle play "Edward I", who quotes Latin from Cato.<sup>1</sup> There is no interest in or realistic portrayal of this character who is of such slight importance in the play that he does not have a name but is called "A Farmer."

Mr. Gummere has a very excellent summary of Peele's "Old Wives Tale" from which I quote the following: "PEELE brought a new and more subtle strain of humor into the drama. Realism left shabby and squalid things, ale house wit and laid hold of a sweeter life. Reckless good-natured scholar, Peele fairly followed the call which haunted so many academic outcasts, the call which Greene and Dekker answered with those sweet songs of country life and which led Peele to the making of "Old Wives Tale." He wove romance and realism into a fabric that may well show a coarse pattern and often very clumsy workmanship, but on the whole it is a pleasing pattern and a new. Moreover it is all made of English stuff. The tales he used for his main drama were familiar to English ears; the persons of his framework play were kindly folk of an English village, and the air of it all is as fresh and wholesome as an English summer morning."<sup>2</sup>

1. Edward I, Sc.XII, L. 169

2. Gayley's Rep. Eng. Comedies. p. 347

## PORTER

"The Pleasant History of Two Angry Women of Abington" was printed in London in 1599. This is the only extant play of Henry Porter. It is a comedy of unadulterated native flavor, breathing rural life and manners. Its realism reflects Mak and Johan of the morality plays, and Gammer Gurton. Few English plays can boast of scenes more realistic and humorous than the "game at tables,"<sup>1</sup> the burlesque wooing of Mall at the window, and the comic irony of the wanderers in the dark.

Unlike most of the plays a large part of the play takes place out of doors: in an orchard, a bowling green, a garden, the court yard of a house, a forest, a cunny green, a grove and a field. In fact only three of the fourteen scenes take place within a house; so the play has an out-of-door atmosphere. The characters stand out as real people - people that Porter no doubt had met on many a cross country stroll; for he writes as an observer of the country rather than as a man exhibiting unusual interest in the country folk, consequently his treatment is not as sympathetic as Greene's. Porter also deals with a different class - the country gentlefolk, - who are not very different in education and culture from the urban folk.

The plot is much ado about nothing. Two women, Mrs. Barnes and Mrs. Goursey became angry without any cause, as two women often do, and their husbands try to bury the strife

1. Back Gammon.



by marrying the children, Frank Goursey and Mall Barnes. The lovers are to meet on the "cunny green" at night, but the mothers, finding out the plot, attempt to prevent the meeting as well as the match. They all became lost and wander hither and thither, thru forest and field until wives and husbands meet. The two angry women are reconciled after the husbands terrify them by pretending to fight a mortal combat. The lost sweetheart is found and the pair receive the blessings of their mothers.

Several stock types of characters are used; serving men, shrews and hen-pecked husbands; but there is a charm at once natural and masterly in the ease in which they are represented. Custom and public opinion play a large place in their lives much as it does today. Even in small things the question "What will people say?" haunts them.

Mr. B. "What will the neighboring country vulgar say

When as they hear that you fell out at dinner?"<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Goursey and Mrs. Barnes are an amalgam of stock shrews, gossips, and jealous wives. Frank Goursey and Philip Barnes are young imitators of their respective fathers, Mall. Mr. Gayley calls "The coarsest minded girl in Elizabethan comedy, a dramatic portrayal of the animal."<sup>2</sup> She is clearly what her mother calls her, "lustie guts," "a vile girl," and a "swearing wench." The serving men are similar to Jonson's humour characters. Dick Coomes brags, swears, drinks and quarrels. Nicholas Proverb, true to his name always speaks in proverbs. The conventional name "Hodge" is used for one

1. Sc. I, L. 193

2. Gayley's Rep. Eng. Com. p. 531.

of the servants. Each character stands out separate and distinct. By omitting the references to farming and country fare the characters would suit the city equally well. The servants even wear the same clothes as the city serving men, blue coats, sword and buckles;<sup>1</sup> and speak Latin. All this goes to show that Porter is a city man, interested in city people. He uses a country setting for the novelty and not because of his democratic spirit. However, he succeeds in producing a realistic comedy without affectation and constraint. There is no dialect and there are no stilted obsolete passages.

Countryfied expressions are used by Philip in the description of one of Mall's suitors.

"There came a farmer's son a wooing to her,  
 A proper man, well landed too he was,  
 A man that for his wit need not to ask  
 What time a year 'twere good to sow his oats,  
 Nor yet his barley, no nor when to reap,  
 To plow his fallows, or to fell his trees."<sup>2</sup>

Another local touch is found in Hodge's speech, "Boy, is not this goodly weather for barley?"<sup>3</sup> The pleasures of the country gentleman seem to be the same as those of the city men. Hunting, bowling, tennis, backgammon, and football are mentioned in this play. Drinking is common among all classes of men and women.

Meat, evidently, is an important article of diet as var-

1. Sc. II, L. 220 ff.

2. Sc. V. L. 24 ff.

3. Sc. IV, L. 36.

ious kinds are mentioned; Collops and eggs, steak, sliced beef, mutton, veal, duck and goose. Many of Nicholas Proverb's sayings are familiar proverbs today:

"Haste makes waste."

"Use makes perfection."<sup>1</sup>

"You must not leap over the stile before you come to it."<sup>2</sup>

"When a man doth to Rome come he must do as there is done."<sup>3</sup>

An old shoe meant good luck. That is the reason we still attach it to the trunks of a bride and groom.

The satiric treatment of the women by the men reflects the prevalent treatment by the Elizabethan dramatists. We are led to believe that shrewish qualities are more frequently found on the stage than in real life.

Mr. Gourney: "We part partners of two curs'd wives."

Mr. Barnes: "Oh, where shall we find a man so bless'd that is not."<sup>4</sup>

Even the young boys have caught the spirit of their fathers. Young Philip says, "Woman's love is lightly won and lightly lost, and then their hatred is deadly and extreme."<sup>5</sup> The marriageable age of girls is quite young. "At fifteen pretty maids are fit for handsome men,"<sup>6</sup> and if they are not married by seventeen they begin to despair. Marriage is the only goal in a girl's life, owing to her limited environment and education. Frank gives the boys' attitude toward marriage when he speaks of it as "shackles of marriage" and "a quest of sorrow."

1. Sc. III, L. 412.

2. Sc. III, L. 374.

3. Sc. III, L. 426.

4. Sc. I. L. 246 ff.

5. Sc. IV. L. 17 f.

6. Sc. III. L. 155.

We learn more about the country in this play than in any preceeding play. It represents prosperous countrymen - gentlemen, with servants, refinement and culture of their city cousins. The characters are real individuals. The language is free from classicism and flows along in easy conversational style. Judged by modern standards the humor is a little coarse. The picture is untouched by satire, as well as by sympathy or a keen interest in country folk.

# THE AUTHOR OF "WILY BEGUILLED."

"Wily Beguiled" is an anonymous play published in 1606. There is no act division, and a definite setting is not given; however, the play is of great importance to this study because the entire action takes place in the country. It is a story of Master Gripe's attempt to marry his daughter, Lelia, to a rich farmer, Peter "a very idiot," whom Lelia fairly hates. She is in love with a scholar, Sophos, whom her father dislikes because he is poor. Churmes, a lawyer, promises Gripe to bring about the marriage of Lelia and Peter, all the while he is planning to marry Lelia, himself. Gripe's son Fortunatus, suddenly returns home, thwarts Churmes, and unites the reallovers who are forgiven and receive the blessing of Master Gripe.

Master Gripe lives in the country but belongs to a higher class than his neighbor, farmer Plodall. He represents the conventional type of an avaricious usurer which appears the same in city and in country. His son is well educated and a soldier. Lelia is a refined, petted, self-willed aristocratic girl. She expresses her contempt for Peter Plodall to her Nurse.

"Think'st thou,

That I can stoop so low to take a brown bread crust  
And wed a clown, that's brought up at the cart?"

Nurse:

"Cart quotha? Ay he'll cart you, for he  
Cannot tell how to court you."

The children scorn the country folk; in manners, education and speech, they are above them. This differentiation is clearly shown in Peter Plodall's humorous wooing. He smacks of the country, of the soil. In many respects Peter is a simpleton, lacking even the common sense of his father, who is his mouthpiece.

Peter: "I have heard very well of you and so has my my father too; and he sent me to you a wooing, and if you have any mind of marriage I hope I shall maintain you as well as any husband's wife in the country.... Faith, I have no manors, but a pretty homestead and we have great store of oxen and horses, and carts and plows and household stuff, and great flocks of sheep, and flocks of geese and capons, and hens and ducks. Oh, we have a fine yard of pullen! And thank God, here's a fine weather for my father's lambs."

Lelia's reply: "I cannot live content in discontent

For as no music can delight the ears  
Where all parts of discords are composed  
So wed-lock bands will consist in jars  
Wherein condition there's no sympathy  
Then rest yourself content with this  
answer,

I can not love."

But Peter is not to be daunted,

"It's no matter what you say for my father told me this much before I came that you would be something nice at first; but he bade me like you ne'er the worse for that, for I were the liker to speed."

Will Cricket, the son of one of Plodall's tenants, is not a country type but a typical clown. His courtship with Peg, the daughter of Lelia's nurse, is very witty and foolish. Peg lives with her grandmother who does not understand the gay, free way of a young girl. Having two in authority over her makes it doubly trying to Peg. "Who would live under a mother's nose and a granam's tongue? A maid can not love or catch a lip clip but there's such a tittle-tattle, and 'Do not so', and 'Be not so light', and 'Be not so fond', and 'Do not kiss', and 'Do not love', and I can not tell what." Then she sings:

"A sweet thing is love  
That rules both heart and mind  
There's no comfort in the world  
To women that are kind."

Robin Goodfellow<sup>1</sup> is a malicious intriguer, whose nature whether human or diabolical, is left somewhat in doubt, for Will Cricket calls him "a cup companion", "as good a drunken rogue as ever lived"; while Robin says that he learned the devilish trade from his mother in hell who made him her instrument on earth:

"To creep into the presence of great men  
And under color of their friendships  
Effect such wonders in the world.  
Of the best men I raise a common fame,  
And honest women rob of their good name."

However, he is treated with contempt in this play, his plans

1. This same character appears in *Mid Summer's Night Dream*, 1593. "Grim, the Collier of Croydon", 1600, and "Sad Shepherd."

are frustrated and he is beaten by Fortunatus. After his beating he says to Churmes, "Let's go into some place where we are not known and there set up the art of knavery with the second edition."

There is considerable realism in the language of Plodall and his son Peter. Will Cricket's speech abounds in puns while Lelia, Sophos and Fortunatus reflect pastoral influences by their flowery and mythological language. The country custom of "crying weddings" is mentioned. A proclamation of intended marriage is made in the church a week or more before the wedding takes place. A country marriage is a time of great feasting, - joy, and drinking. Staple articles of diet are mentioned as the country fare. Old Plodall says, "I have brot my son up hardy with brown bread, fat bacon, puddings and sause, and by our Lady we think it good fare too."

The treatment of country life in "Wily Beguiled" is very characteristic of the general attitude of the Elizabethans towards the country. The farmer and his son are treated realistically, almost with contempt. Gripe's children reflect city ways of thinking and talking. The entire play is trivial in plot, theme and general treatment.



## JONSON.

Ben Jonson has been called the heartiest, healthiest and most vigorous writer of pure comedy, untouched by sentimentalism in the Elizabethan period. This student of human nature was born 1573 in Westminster and after a varied life died in 1637. He mirrors life as well as criticises and interprets it. He is not a realist in the sense of giving a photographic picture of life but he presents ideas or types of characters and makes them realistic by detail and definiteness of setting, and the free use of local color. Jonson is noted for his great fertility of types.

One of his favorite types is the gull by which he exposes the ignorance, affectedness, and incongruity of pretension. In "Every Man In His Humour" he represents a country gull, Master Stephen from Hogsden, and a city gull, Master Matthew. Stephen in contrast with Matthew comes from a good family and has considerable wealth. He is noted for his ignorance, his folly, and his greenness. Both men are weak minded and easily fooled; they copy and imitate others. Aping after city ways is naturally a marked characteristic of Stephen whom Welbred calls "stupidity, itself."<sup>1</sup> He borrows a book on hunting and hawking; he takes lessons in the art of smoking from Bobadill from whom he also learns to swear, often using his whole stock of oaths at one time; eg. "By Pharoah's foot!.Body o' Caesar! "Upon my honor", and "By St. George!" By nature he is happy and carefree but because

1. Act III, V. 5.

he thinks it is the style of a gentleman he assumes the role of melancholia. Notwithstanding his painstaking care to imitate the city, the city men recognize him for what he is, "He is of rustical cut, I know not how; he doth not carry himself like a gentleman of fashion."<sup>1</sup>

This same desire to become a gentleman is the "humour" of Sogliardo in "Every Man Out Of His Humour." He is so enamored of the name gentleman that he will have it at any cost. He came up to London every Law term<sup>2</sup> to learn to take tobacco and see new shows. Carlo Buffone gave him the following list of instructions to become a gentleman:

- "1. Give up housekeeping in the country and live altogether in the city among gallants.
2. Turn four or five acres of best land into two or three trunks of apparel.
3. Learn to play cards.
4. Have two or three peculiar oaths to swear.
5. Feed cleanly, sit melancholy, pick your teeth when you can not speak.
6. At plays sit on the stage and flout the actors, providing you have on a good suit.
7. Pretend allies with courtiers and great persons.
8. It is excellent policy to owe much in these days."<sup>3</sup>

Carlo Buffone also instructed him in that great accomplishment - smoking. Tobacco had recently been introduced into

1. III, 1, L. 20.

2. Note. Law terms were times when the country gentlemen flocked to London with their families to settle their disputes, see plays and puppet shows and learn fashions.

3. Act I, Sc. I.

England by Sir Walter Raleigh and the art of using it was a matter of serious study among the gallants and gulls,

Another country type in this play is Puntarvolo whom Jonson characterizes as "a vain glorious knight wholly consecrated to singularity, resolving in spite of public derision to stick to his own particular fashion, phrase and gesture." His affected, unnatural ways are illustrated in his greeting to his wife: "I could wish that for the time of your vouchsafed abiding here, and more real entertainment, this my house stood on the Muses Hill and these my orchards were those of the Hesperides."<sup>1</sup>

A little more realism is shown in the portrayal of Sordido, a rich yeoman who "dispende some seven or eight hundred pounds a year." He places great confidence in his penny almanac which contains, besides the weather report, a list of days favorable for buying and selling - matters of high import to the Sordidos of all ages. At last he becomes discouraged because "beggars live as well as their betters," and he hangs himself. He is cut down and saved by Rustii, unnamed, and ever afterwards he is cured of his "humour". Then he makes amends for his past life by restoring twenty fold

"To all men what with wrong I robbed them,  
My barnes and garners shall stand open still  
To all the poor that come.  
Come in with me and witness my repentence,  
----- Now I prove

1. Act II, Sc. III.

No life is blest, that is not graced with love."<sup>1</sup>

Fungoso, the son of Sordido, is a law student in London. Jonson describes him as quite a modern college boy: "One that has reveled in his time and follows the fashions afar off like a spy. He makes it the whole bent of his endeavor to wring sufficient means from his wretched father to put him in the courtier's cut; at which he earnestly aims but so unluckily that he falls short a suit."<sup>2</sup> The boy continually writes home for money for law books which he spends for clothes. Jonson aimed a stroke of humorous satire at the changing fashions which affected men then as much as they do women today. One of Fungoso's letters to his father is so typical of modern school boys' letters that I quote it entire. It shows that human nature has not changed very much in these last three hundred years. "Sweet and dear father, (desiring you first to send me your blessing which is more worth to me than gold or silver) I desire you likewise to be advertised that this Shrovetide, contrary to custom, we use always to have revels; which is indeed dancing, and makes an excellent shew in truth, especially if we gentlemen be well attired, which our seniors note and think the better of our fathers, the better we are maintained, and that they shall know if they come up and have anything to do in the law; therefore, good father, this is for your own sake as well as mine to redesire you that you let me not want that which is for the

1. Act III, Sc. VIII.

2. Character of persons in E. M. *Out of Humour*.

setting up of your name in the honorable volume of gentility, that I may say to our calumneators with Tully, Ego sum ortus domus meae, tu occasus tuae, and thus not doubting of your fatherly benevolence, I humbly ask your blessing and pray God to bless you.

Yours, if his own,

Fungoso."<sup>1</sup>

Two country men are presented in "Bartholomew Fair," Bartholomew Cokes, an esquire of Harrow o' the Hill, and his man Humphrey Wasp. Cokes is a finished picture of a simpleton. His childish but insatiable curiosity, his eagerness to possess every object within reach, his total abandonment of himself to every amusement that offers, his incapacity to grasp ideas, joined with his folly, selfishness, cunning, and occasional fits of obstinacy, tend altogether to form a character infinitely amusing. He is stripped in succession of everything valuable, even of his clothes and makes his last appearance nearly in a state of nudity.

Bartholomew Fair is a great place for country and City folk to gather. The booth of "roast pig" and "ginger bread" is frequented by all classes. Ignorant, unsuspecting people are the prey of "Fair sharks," fakers, and cutpurses. This is what the latter thot of Cokes.

Edgworth: "A delicate green boy, methinks he out-

scrambles them all. I cannot persuade myself but he goes to grammar school yet, and plays the truant today."

Night: "Would he had another purse to cut."

Edgworth: "Purse! A man might cut out his kidneys, I think and he never feel 'em, he is so earnest at sport. Was ever green plover so pulled? He will not have so much land left as to rear a calf within this twelve month."<sup>1</sup>

Humphrey Waspé, the confident and careful "Numps", is also tricked and disgraced on every occasion. In the first scene he gives a graphic picture of country folk in a city, staring in windows and reading signs: "Yesterday we walked London to show the city to the gentlewoman Cokes shall marry but afore I will endure such another half day with him, I'll be drowned with a good gib-cat in the great pond at home. He would name you all the signs over, as he went, aloud, and where he spied a parrot or a monkey, there he was pitched, with all the little long coats about him, male and female; no getting him away! I thot he would run mad o' the black boy in Bucklersbury that takes the scurvy, roguy tobacco there."<sup>2</sup>

"A Tale of A Tub" is Jonson's first play to be laid in the country, at Finsbury-hundred. The date of composition is not definitely known, some critics place it as early as 1597, others as late as 1630. There is a record of "A Tale of A TUB" being performed at court in 1634 and "not

1. Act IV, Sc. I.

2. Act I, Sc. I.

likte." <sup>1</sup> The play is not adapted to the meridian of the court. However, Jonson is less to blame than his royal Master, Charles. The fault lay more in his Majesty's not being acquainted with the "humour" and pursuits of the vulgar, than in any deficiency of fidelity on the part of Jonson in the description. In the prologue he states that his play will not deal with state affairs.

"But acts of clowns and constables today

Stuff out the scenes of our ridiculous play,

---Antique proverbs, --- At Wakes and Ales,

. With country precedents and old wives' tales

We bring you now to shew what different things

The cotes of clowns are from the courts of Kings."<sup>2</sup>

The individuality and picturesqueness of men and women of low life, with their characteristic occupations, amusements and foibles are utilized by Jonson in "A Tale of A Tub."

The realism of the play consists of country references rather than a realistic portrayal of country characters, for Jonson always represents types rather than individuals.

The play opens with the old valentine custom of drawing a husband. Awdrey Turfe draws John Clay, a tile maker, for her valentine and her parents insist that she shall marry him because they had drawn each other in a similar way thirty years before. The entire play is a series of intrigues, or plots of various men to marry Awdrey. The play ends with a wedding dinner given by Lady Tub for Awdrey and the lucky man, Pol

1. Ed. Becker & Son vol. VI p. 226, Notes.

2. Prologue to the Tale of A Tub.

Martin.

The rural festival called in the prologue "An Ale" was so denominated from the quantity of ale consumed. At the "Bride Ale" prepared for Awdrey, besides the ale and bride's cake, great quantities of meat were roasted and the streets were strewn with herbs. The superstition of the people is illustrated in their belief in signs. The first arranged wedding never took place because just before the time appointed,

"An ox spoke and died soon after,

A cow lost her calf,

The ducks quacked and the hens cackled,

A drake danced around,

A goose was cut in the head,

A noble pig as he was roasting cried out his eyes."<sup>1</sup>

The current belief in ghosts and devils is also referred to. Puppy, one of the servants is frightened nearly to death by seeing what he supposes to be a devil in the barn among the hay. He ran out crying,

"Oh for a cross! a collop,

Of Friar Bacon, or a conjuring stick

Of Dr. Faustus! spirits are in the barn."<sup>2</sup>

The spirit is no other than the lost bridegroom, John Clay, hiding in the wheat straw. Man-like Tobie Turfe looks out for the cash and "empties his wife's purse of all her milk money."<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Turfe, from all accounts, is a practical woman who knows how to save the pennies which she makes by

1. Act IV, Sc. I.

2. Act IV. VI.

3. III, VIII.



careful marketing her eggs and butter.<sup>1</sup> The language is the conventional south west dialect. The servants use it freely. Hilts says, "cham no zive," for I am no sieve. "y" is prefixed to most of the passive participles, "yground", "yclept", etc. Z is used for s, "zay", "zee", "zon"; v is used for f, "vat", "vore", "vive veet".

This play clearly illustrates Jonson's lack of sympathy with romantic and courtly literature as well as his conventional mode of treating low life. He pictures types rather than gives first hand studies of country people. He is a much more accurate portrayer of country scenes, superstitions and customs than of the people, themselves. In spite of his satiric representation of "humours" we learn a great deal about domestic manners and pursuits in the country.

When Jonson died in 1637 he left unfinished the beautiful pastoral fragment "The Sad Shepherd." In this play he attempts to make the pastoral more realistic by bringing it in touch with real English life and by using an English setting as Lyly did in "Gallathea." Sherwood is not idealized as Lincolnshire was, instead it is a real landscape with a forest, hills, valleys, cottages, a castle, a river, pastures, herds, flocks and country simplicity. Robin Hood's bower, his well, the swine herd's oak, the hermit's cell, also, add to the English character of the scene. The supernatural is furnished by the familiar agency of a witch which is more natural and more English than the use of Greek Gods and Goddesses. "Witchcraft was a living issue in Jonson's

time. Persecutions reached their maximum in the seventeenth century. The King and most of his subjects allied themselves unhesitatingly with the cause of superstition; but witchcraft was not without its opponents. Among these was Jonson who fearlessly exposed the prevailing follies and crimes. However, in the Sad Shepherd instead of hard realism, with all its hideous details, the more picturesque beliefs and traditions are used for purely imaginative and poetical purposes. Maudlin is a witch of a decidedly vulgar type but there is no satirical intent. Jonson, for the purpose of his play, accepts for the moment, the prevailing attitude toward witchcraft."<sup>1</sup> Her house and the different kinds of magic she performed are described in detail.

"Within a gloom dimble she doth dwell  
 Down in the pit, o'ergrown with brakes and briars,  
 Close by the ruins of a shaken abbey  
 'Mongst groves and grots, near an old charnel house  
 Where you shall find her setting in her fourm  
 As fearful and melancholy as that  
 She is about; with cattepillar's knells  
 And knotty cobwebs, rounded in with spells,  
 To make housewives do no work nor the milk churn!  
 Writhe children's wrists! and suck their breath in sleep  
 Get vials of their blood! and where the sea  
 Casts up his slimy ooze, search for a weed  
 To open locks with, and to rivet charms."<sup>2</sup>

*Paraphrased from*

1. "The Devil is An Ass" ed. by W. S. Jonson. Int. p. LXII.
2. Act II, Sc. III.

The rustic cast of the imagery in the speeches of Lorel, the swineherd is very different from the conventional flowery pastoral language.

"Deft Mistress! whiter than the cheese new prest,  
Smoother than cream, and softer than the curds,  
Why start ye from me ere ye hear me tell  
My wooing errand, and what rents I have?  
Large herds and pastures, swine and Kie mine own,  
----- twenty swarm of bees  
Whilk all the summer hum about the hive,  
And bring me wax and honey in belive,<sup>1</sup>  
An aged oak, the king of all the field  
With a broad branch, there grows before my dur,  
A chestnut, whilk hath larded many a swine  
Whose skins I wear to fend me fra' the cold;"<sup>2</sup>

A different dialect is used in this play; it is the northern phraseology which Jonson took pains to acquire from the player Lacy.<sup>3</sup> It is very noticeable in the language of the huntsman, Scothlock.

"Ay quha suld let me?

I suld be afraid o' you sir, suld I."

The thots of these pastoral characters are natural and eloquent, the style appropriate and the language very beautiful in places. Jonson's usual sarcasm is not found in "The Sad Shepherd."

1. readily.

2. Act III, Sc. I.

3. C. Notes p. 262. vol. VI of Jonson' ed. by Bicker & Son.

On the whole Jonson's contribution to rustic drama is considerable, two plays with entire setting in the country and many country types. All of his country characters use a dialect, for, as he says in *The Sad Shepherd*, "they are not else themselves without their language." In spite of his satiric representation of "humours" his five plays abound in country references, figures, and manners. His women show coarseness and weakness, in fact they are very insignificant. His sarcastic temperament accounts for his choice of types; country gull or bumpkin, esquire, constable, and serving men. Idealization, in the sense of Greene's description of the Pinner, is never found in Jonson. Regardless of the many country allusions his characters do not stand out as distinctly rural individuals. He never attracts our sympathy or arouses our interest, or for that matter, reveals any great amount of love himself for the country folk. Jonson is democratic only in the fact that he represents so many types in so many classes. He did not exhibit any special preference for any class. He writes as an observer, as an on-looker, rather than as a sympathetic man among men.

## HEYWOOD.

Thomas Heywood was the most prolific dramatic writer of the period. He claims to have written or had a hand in two hundred twenty plays. Little is known concerning his life except that he was born in Lincolnshire about 1572 and died about 1648. He is the first English dramatist to write a tragedy dealing with common people, the first author to break away from the Aristotelian standards and show that noble suffering can belong to common folk. "The Woman Killed with Kindness" written in 1603, has justly been termed the first democratic tragedy and marks a definite step in the development of interest in the great common class. If common people were capable of strong tragic feelings, if once they were admitted to the aristocratic reserved stage of tragedy, does that not foreshadow their admittance to places of honor and trust in government, religion and education? I do not mean that this play had any particular influence in the development of democracy; but it is an expression of the undercurrent of thought and feeling, of forces and movements not yet realized at the time the play was written. Another point of interest to this paper is the fact that the first democratic tragedy deals with country people and not common people in the city as the tradesmen in Lillo's "George Barnwell" which is the finest expression of the next period of this slowly developing humanitarianism in tragedy.

"The Woman Killed With Kindness" is a domestic tragedy

presenting an accurate picture of English country life and manners unrelieved by ornamentation. In the prologue Heywood says,

"Look not for glorious state; our Muse is bent

Upon a barren subject, a bare scene."

Interest is held thruout by the human sympathy and the simple yet at times powerful scenes. The play opens with the marriage of John Frankford to Anne. They are ideally happy at first. Some years later he is compelled to go away from home on business matters and leaves everything in charge of his friend, Wendoll. Wendoll plays false. After a fierce inner struggle with himself the baser nature conquers and he succeeds in enchanting and winning the virtuous wife. When Frankford is convinced of his wife's unfaithfulness, this is his sentence,

"I'll not martyr thee,

Nor mark thee for a strumpet, but with usage

Of more humility torment thy soul,

And kill thee even with Kindness."<sup>1</sup>

She, with all of her possessions, is banished to his manor seven miles away, never to see him nor their two children again. The last scene where they are reconciled and he restores the name of wife just before she died, depicts powerful emotions and elicits our sincere pity for both husband and wife. The marriage of Sir Acton and Susan is an unnecessary and undelicate subplot.

The characterization is realistic but touched with idealism. Frankford is a true, open hearted, magnanimous

1. Act IV. Sc. V. L. 118 ff.

Englishman. Even Wendoll calls him "the most perfectest man that ever England bred."<sup>1</sup> Frankford's sorrow at the close of the play is intensified by the perfect happiness in the beginning.

"How happy am I amongst other men  
That in my mean estate embrace content  
----- But the chief  
Of all the sweet felicities on earth-  
I have a wife, a chaste, and loving wife -  
If man on earth may truly happy be  
Sure, I am he."<sup>2</sup>

The tragic struggle in his soul is seen in his controlling himself and not killing the villain, and in the forgiveness of his wife. Mistress Frankford is pictured ideally at first but this character is not borne out. She is too weak to withstand temptation but her repentance is genuine and our sympathy is aroused by her suffering and her plea for pardon. Wendoll is weak and in all respects inferior to Frankford. The author depicts the tragic struggle before Wendoll sinned against his friend.

The nomenclature of the servants and of the country wenches is very interesting and suggestive; Jack Slime, Roger Brickbat, Nicholas, Jenkin, Cicely Milk Pail, Jane Trubkin, and Isabel Motley. Realistic details are given in describing the dance of these rustics on the green. Some of the familiar country dance tunes are mentioned:

1. I, III, L. 20
2. II, I, L. 1 ff.

"Roger", "The Beginning of the World", "John Come Kiss Me Now", "Cushion Dance", "Hunting of the Fox", "The Hay, The Hay!" "Put On your Smock a' Monday", and "Sillinger's Round".<sup>1</sup> Some of the names are similar to our modern Rag-time songs.

Heywood's three other plays representing country characters are comedies: "The English Traveller," "The Wise Woman of Hogsdon", and "The Fair Maid of the West." In the last play Bess Bridges, a tanner's daughter and a tavern maid, is one of Heywood's strongest female creations. She is honest beautiful, modest and true even tho the saying was at that time that the "worst character you can put on a maid is to draw wine." There are no country references as the story deals largely with fishermen and sailors. In "The English Traveller" the servants reflect the gulf of contempt between the two classes - city and country. The delicate, over refined sense of Reginald, a city servingman perceives the scent of garlick, of fowls and stables upon the garments of Robin the country servingman and so says, "Adieu good cheese and onions; stuff thy gut with speck and barley pudding for digestion; drink whey and sour milk whilst I rinse my throat with Bordeaux and canary."<sup>2</sup> Robin in turn condemns Reginald for his reveling and drunken brawls. In the city he says, "they keep Christmas all the year and blot lean Lent out of the Calendar," where they "feed like horses and drink like fishes." Robin has cows, cattle and beeves to feed, while

1. Act I, Sc. II.

2. Act I, II.



Reginald says, "These that

I keep, and in this pasture graze  
 Are dainty damosellas, bonny girls  
 If thou wast born to hedge, ditch, thresh and plough,  
 And I to revel, banquet and carouse;  
 Thou, peasant, to the spade and pickax, I  
 The batton and stiletto, think it only  
 Thy ill, my good."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the country is characterized by its toil, economy, thrift, honesty and morality; the city is known for its revelry, wine, drunken brawls, prostitution, luxury and ease. In this play Heywood describes and explains country life to his audiences at a typical scene on Market Day<sup>2</sup> at Barnet where all the country gentlemen meet in a friendly way for pleasure, to transact business, to confer with the chapmen, to match their horses and wager on their dogs.

As a country and a city serving man are contrasted in "The English Traveller", so a country Luce is compared with a city Luce in "The Wise Woman Of Hogsdon". The former is more intelligent and keen, quicker to plan and to act than the city Luce, and succeeds in marrying young Chartley, a "wild headed gentleman" in London who is betrothed to the city Luce.

Wise Women or fortune tellers do not seem as popular as they once were. In Heywood's play they consult the wise woman secretly. She is ignorant but cunning and clever.

1. I, II.

2. III, Sc. III.

She reads palms, tells fortunes but has nothing to do with the devil. Her "black art" consists mainly in telling people what she has learned from them, thru questions.

Heywood is noted for his home pictures, for homely incidents of country life and his intimate acquaintance with country gentlemen. He has painted a large number of country people of all types with sympathetic sincerity.

## MIDDLETON.

Thomas Middleton, the greatest realist of the Elizabethan period, presents only five country characters in four of his twenty-four plays. He depicts life as he saw it; he presents things as they were in London; consequently all of his country characters are represented in the city. Middleton's lack of interest is further shown by the fact that the rustics are unnamed; he designates them by "A Country Wench", "Father to a Country Wench", "A Country Girl", "A Host of a Country Inn." The fifth character was not a rustic but a knight, Sir Bounteous Progress.

In the induction to "Michaelmas Term" he assumes that country folk are less keen and clever in good as well as in evil.

"Lay by my conscience;

Give me my gown, that weed is for the country,

We must be civil now, and match our evil

Who first made civil black, he pleased the devil."<sup>1</sup>

Middleton shows that ignorant country girls are the prey of city sharks. In "A Chaste Maid in Cheapside" the Country Girl brings her child to London and leaves it in a shop covered up in a basket in such a way that several men think it is a leg of mutton; when they unwrap the package they find a real live baby. The country girl disappears and is heard of no more.

1. Induction LL. 3-6.

The other country wench is seduced from the country by Dick Hellgill (quite a suggestive name) for his master Lithe. Morals in the city are pictured as being a great deal worse than in the country. However, country morality is not founded on a strong foundation but rather upon ignorance and an absence of temptation. Hellgill analyses woman's weakness and wins the girl by promise of beautiful clothes. "Would'st thou a pretty, beautiful, juicy squall live in a poor thatched house i' the country, in such servile habiliment, and may well pass for a gentlewoman i' th' city? I know you are all chaste enough till one thing or other tempt you. Refuse a satin gown and you dare not."

Country Wench: "You know I have no power to do it."<sup>1</sup>  
The instability of morality based on ignorance is proven when the country wench takes up the city ways and manners and soon becomes as corrupt as the worst.

Her father shows true, sincere, human regard for his lost daughter. He searches for her all over the city; then does not recognize her in her new apartments because of the great changes that have taken place in her. His lament for her is truly pathetic.

"Oh if she knew

The dangers that attend on women's lives  
She'd rather lodge under a poor thatched roof  
Than under carved ceilings.

This man-devouring city! where I spent  
My unshapen youth, to be my age's curse.

O heavens, I know the price of ill too well.

Tho she be poor, her honor's precious

I'll serve until I find her, in disguise,

Such is my care to fright her from base evils

I leave calm state to live amongst you, devils."

(referring to the city.)<sup>1</sup>

In "A Trick To Catch The Old One" the country Inn Keeper goes to London with Witgood to help him fool his rich old Uncle Lucre. The city men generally regard the country men as being honest and without deceit, so Lucre falls into the trap and is easily caught by "The Host" who is a mere tool of slight importance in the hands of the crafty young Witgood.

"A Mad World My Masters" represents Sir Bounteous Progress, a liberal knight, who kept open house for all comers in the country. The old man has all the vices of a city man, is easily cozened but takes everything good naturedly. He speaks of his "mean lodging", "hard down bed" and "poor cambric sheets", but from the number of guests he entertained his house must have been quite spacious and his fare quite sumptuous. These articles of diet are mentioned: "sac, partridge, wild duck, pheasant, plover, wood cock." He has his own "fish pond" and "cocks pen." As the knight frequented the city, he uses the language of the city. The entire play is in prose. There is no satiric treatment of the country or the country men.

Country references are rather incidental with Middleton.

No where does he exhibit an interest in the country except to show up London life by contrasting it with the country; he uses the country characters largely to help him expose the customs and vice of the city. He reflects the Elizabethan lack of interest in the common people of the country.

## DEKKER.

"The Witch of Edmonton" the second tragedy dealing with country folk, was written in 1623 by Dekker in collaboration with Ford and Rowley. On the title page the play is called "A Known True Story"; It is the account of Elizabeth Sawyer of Islington who was executed in 1621 for witchcraft, consequently the play is a first hand study of witchcraft which was a very popular belief at that time. The clown says, "Faith, witches themselves are so common now-a-days that the counterfeit will not be regarded. They say we have three or four in Edmonton besides Mother Sawyer."<sup>1</sup> Mother Sawyer is a wretched and poverty stricken old woman driven to commerce with the supernatural in revenge for ill treatment on the part of her neighbors. A devil in the shape of a black dog exacts from her the usual blood pledge and becomes her familiar. The feud with the neighborhood continues until deserted by the evil spirit, her hut is burned and she is convicted of many acts of spite and mischief, and hung. This is the sub plot from which the play receives its name.

The main plot emphasizes the didactic purpose that a curse hangs on the heads of those "who rather choose to marry a goodly portion than a dowry of virtues." Frank Thorney after secretly marrying Winnifred, his uncle's maid, is forced by his father to wed Susan Carter, the daughter of a wealthy yeoman, for her money. Mother Sawyer's black dog brushing against the leg of young Thorney conveys mur-

der to his heart and he cold bloodedly murders Susan with a knife. He binds himself to a tree and when Carter and Old Thorney arrive he accuses Warbeck and Somerton of the murder; later he is convicted and hanged.

Humanity and democracy are the keynotes of this play which is distinguished for its vivid and sympathetic portrayal of a number of rustic types. Carter is an honest Hertfordshire yeoman who, like George a' Greene, refuses to be called a gentleman.

"No gentleman I, spare the mastership,

Call me by my name, John Carter." <sup>1</sup>

He is a good, staunch, true, just man, a type of country men that still survives today. He makes fun of the scantiness of city fare. "He shall be welcome to bread, beer and beef, yeoman's fare. We have no kickshaws; full dishes, whole belly fulls. Should I diet three days at one of the slender city suppers you might send me up to Barber-Surgeon's Hall the fourth day, to hang up for a skeleton."<sup>2</sup> In the same scene he shows his broad mindedness and impartiality in comparing the city and country. "One of the country roaring lads! We have such as well as the city, and as arrant rake-hells as they are, tho not so nimble at their prizes of wit." Carter is an excellent father to his two daughters. He has no mercy for Frank when he learns that he has killed Susan, yet out of the greatness of his heart at Frank's death he pities the widowed Winnifred and provides for her in his own home. He tries to cheer Old Thornton, "We have lost our children both on's, the wrong way, but we can not help it' better or

1. Act 1, Sc. II

2. Act I. Sc. II.



worse, 'tis now as 'tis."<sup>1</sup> He is not a fatalist but makes the best of things which is a general characteristic of country people.

The women are idealistically drawn. Winnifred changes her life from a loose whore to a faithful, repentant wife. Her devotion to her husband is beautiful and tender. Susan belongs to the same type - a constant wife. She is somewhat passive.

Frank Thorney is a creature of circumstance. Fate and the Black Dog account for his evil passion in which he killed his second wife Susan. He, of course, shows a weakness when he lies to his father in denying his first marriage, and is forced, for financial reasons, to marry Susan. He meets death very heroically and there reveals his true manhood, and the depth of his love for his father and wife. There are touches of sentimentalism in the portrayal of both Frank and Susan.

Cuddy Banks and the Morris dancers furnish the humor. They are not differentiated from city clowns. Their dresses are adorned with bells of different pitch arranged to sound in harmony. The Foregallant, hobby horse, Maid Marian and Father Sawgut, the fiddler, are prominent characters in the dance which they give from house to house.

The character of Mother Sawyer is drawn with great sympathy. A touch of pathos is felt for the unhappy trafficker with evil. Neither the actual possession of the grotesque

familiar spirit nor the supernatural quality of her traffic is called into question. Dekker exhibits no disbelief in witchcraft itself. Altho the supernaturalism is crude it is very effective. At first Mother Sawyer seems to be a normal woman, a human spirit, but she is driven to commerce with the devil by her neighbors.

"If every poor old woman

Be trod on thus by slaves, reviled, kicked, beaten

As I am daily, she to be revenged

Had need turn witch."<sup>1</sup>

The contract scene<sup>2</sup> and the trial depict the deep feeling and passion of the old witch. In the trial she gives a scathing condemnation of the city.

"What are your painted things in princes courts,

Upon whose eyelids lust sits, blowing fires

To burn men's souls in sensual hot desires,

----- Men in gay clothes

Whose backs are laden with titles and with honors

Are within far more crooked than I am

And, if I be a witch, more witch like,

These by enchantments can whole lordships change

To trunks of rich attire, turn ploughs and teams

To Flanders mares and coaches,

Have you not city witches who can turn

Their husbands' wares, whole standing shops of wares

1. Act IV, Sc. I.

2/ Act II. Sc. I.

To sumptuous tables, gardens of stolen sin,

In one year wasting what scarce twenty win?<sup>1</sup>

Dekker's method is realism fused with idealism. The country people are treated with as much idealized realism and tenderness as the tradesmen are in his domestic comedy, "The Shoemaker's Holiday." He shows a knowledge of country occupation, animals and eatables but used no rustic dialect. There are several realistic rustic details; for example, Cuddy Banks promises to meet Kate Carter at the "still in the southwest end of his father's peasfield."<sup>2</sup> Cuddy also speaks of "cherry pit"<sup>3</sup> a children's game in which cherry stones are pitched into a small hole. The country man's dependence on the almanac is mentioned twice.

The Witch of Edmonton is a strictly rustic drama, a tragedy depicting deep feelings and emotions. It is distinguished for the author's treatment of country characters who exhibit a variety of feelings and experiences. There is a genuine interest in the country and strong criticism of the city. Instead of satire, Dekker has the kindest feeling for the country folk.

1. Act IV, Sc. I.

2. Act II, Sc. I.

3. III, I.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

In addition to the plays by well known Elizabethan play-wrights there are five plays scattered thru the period which represent country people.

1593 "Jack Straw" by Danter

1600 "Grim, The Collier of Croydon," Anon

1608 "Merry Devil of Edmonton", Anon.

1612 "Hogge Hath Lost His Pearl", Taylor.

1614 "Albumazar", Tomkins.

"The Life and Death of Jack Straw" is a form of a chronicle play giving the history of the rebellion of Jack Straw and Wat Tyler for "wealth and liberty." The insurrection is started by Jack Straw killing a King's collector for attempting to collect money on his daughter. The ill treatment of the poor is suggested in Jack's speech to the collector.

"For I am sure thy office

Doth not arm thee with such authority

Thus to abuse the poor people of the country

To play so unmanly and beastly a part

As to search my daughter thus in my presence."<sup>1</sup>

The Essex and Kentish men are collected together and come to London to revenge the officer's ill demeanor. Their spirit of revenge and liberty is kindled with a desire for spoil.

"Ere we'll be pinched with poverty

To dig our meat and victuals from the ground

That are as worthy of good maintenance  
 As any gentlemen, your grace doth keep  
 We will be kings and lords within ourselves  
 And not abide the pride of tyranny.  
 If the Essex men will needs be gone  
 Content: let them go suck their mams at home  
 We came for spoil and spoil we'll have."<sup>1</sup>

The utter lack of respect for kings and nobles astonishes the Lord Mayor.

"Villain I say, whence comes this rage of thine?  
 How darest thou, a dunghill bastard born  
 To brave thy sovereign and his nobles thus?  
 Proud rebel that thou art, take that withal."<sup>2</sup>

And he stabs him.

The country people are distinguished from the court people by their realistic language. They often speak in prose and make blunders in their speech. The country characters are very bold, happy go lucky, saucy men, with something of the spirit of Robin Hood. Hob Carter, the captain of one band, is pardoned but Ball and Tyler are executed. The sympathy is all with the King and his followers as the purpose of the play is to show the folly of revolt against the anointed head.

The name and sub plot in "Grim, the Collier of Croydon" are furnished by country folk who are favorably contrasted

1. Act II, p. 400.

2. Act III. p. 406.

with city folk in the main plot. Clack, the miller, and Grim, the collier, love the same girl, Joan; but Grim, aided by Robin Goodfellow and the girl's own preference, finally succeeds in winning her. The two suitors rail at each other in a realistic way. Clack: "Well then I perceive you mean to lead your life in a coal pit like one of the devil's drudges and have your face look like the outward side of an old iron pot or a blacking box."<sup>1</sup> Joan, a true "tricksy" girl, defends Grim,

"I'll not dispise the trades ye either have  
Yet Grim the Collier may if he be wise  
Live even as merry as the day is long  
For in my judgment in his mean estate  
Consists as much content as in more wealth."<sup>2</sup>

Robin Goodfellow, mentioned before in *Wily Beguiled*, is a devil who could assume any shape he chose. He left the city to see if "homespun lasses milder be than the curs'd dames" in London. "But woe betide the silly country maids

For I shall fleet their cream bowls

night by night

And slice the bacon flitches as they hang."<sup>3</sup>

The play is similar to "Gammer Gurton's Needle" in that there is so much beating. Robin disguised as Grim fights with the miller and the parson. There is a homely realism about the speeches of the country people, most of which are given in prose,- the Londoners speak in poetry. It is somewhat out of character for Grim to quote Latin from Cato but he

1. Act II, p. 416

2. Act II, p. 416

3. Act III

does so in common with Peele's Farmer in "Edward I" and from the very same authority. An interesting country festival is described, - A Nutting on Holyrood Day. Robin Goodfellow is so impressed at the Nutting with the modest country Maid, Joan, that he says that he could report in hell better of women than his master could who ranged among the "city's wanton wives." That is the general conclusion of the play that the country lasses are milder, more honest, more lovable than the over fine, false, scheming, "silken girls" of the city. The treatment of the country is generous, sympathetic and wholesome.

The author of "The Merry Devil of Edmonton" is unknown altho Hazlitt says, "It is more likely, both from style and subject matter, to have been Heywood's than any other person's."<sup>1</sup> Fabel, the "Merry Devil" is a historic character buried in Edmonton, who lived during the reign of Henry VII. He can hardly be called a country character for he is a scholar at Cambridge, in league with the devil, Coreb. The horrors of the treatment of the supernatural as in "Dr. Faustus" are not found in the "Merry Devil."

"Let our toil to future ages prove

The Devil of Edmonton did good in love."

There are three country scenes in the play; at the Tavern George at Waltham, at the Keeper's of the King's Park; in a graveyard. The country characters, all of them minor parts, are used to furnish the humor. The principal country man is Blague, the Host of the Inn, a jolly, good natured

1. Dramatic Lit. of age of Eliz. p. 221.

fellow who talks a great deal at random, indeed; much of his talk is rank nonsense. This Host with St. John, a priest from Enfield, Banks from Waltham, and Smug, a smith from Edmonton steal deer from the King's forest. Banks gives a realistic picture of himself on his way to the King's Park: "Foot! here's a dark night. I think I have been in fifteen ditches between this and the forest. Soft, here's Enfield church. I am so wet with climbing over into an orchard for to steal filberts. Well here I'll sit in the church porch and wait for the rest of my consorts."<sup>1</sup> Each one of them saw a ghost as he came thru the graveyard. It seems to be an old, old superstition that ghosts and goblins frequent graveyards. The priest has the best imagination of all: "Grass and hay! We saw a spirit here in the church yard; and in the fallow field there's a devil with a man's body upon his back in a white sheet!"<sup>2</sup>

The city men show no real appreciation of nature but are content to use the conventional pastoral references. Sir Ralph refers to the "dew drops", "the nightengale", "the lark" and "the meadows."

The conventional prose is used for the country men and the city men speak in poetry. The play presents a humorous picture of country life as typified in the Parson's refrain:

"Hem grass and hay, we are all mortal, lets live till we die and be merry and there's an end."

1. No act nor scene division p. 250.

2. Page 253.



"The Hogge Hath Lost His Pearl," by Robert Taylor, has one country character, Lightfoot, a gentleman who is visiting his cousin Haddit in the city. There is no realistic treatment; he is a mere figure in the play with no individuality or local coloring. He could just as well have been a city man with the exception of one speech of Haddit's which refers to Lightfoot's country residence: "Man 'tis not here as 'tis with you in the country, not to be had without father's or mother's good will; no, the city is a place of more traffic where each one learns by the example of their elders to make the most of their own either for profit or pleasure."

"Albumazar", written by Tomkins, is another hack play with one country character. Trincalo, a farmer, came to London and is played upon by Albumazar, an astrologer, until he thinks he is transformed into Antonio, a London gentleman. His final estimation of a gentleman, after he had recovered himself, is not very complimentary. "If a gentleman have no pleasure, but what I felt today, a team of horses shall not drag me out of my profession. There's nothing amongst them but borrowing, compounding for half their debts, and have their purses cut for the rest; cozened by whores and frightened by wives." The author is not sarcastic in his treatment of the rustic but like most of the Elizabethans he showed no real interest in the country.

## CONCLUSION.

As a whole the Elizabethan drama shows contempt for the masses. Men and women from the country were often counted only by herds, referred to as rustics; and as individuals they failed to interest the dramatists, who were often content to use them as obscure background or as subjects for farcial and grotesque underplots. "The want of sympathy towards the inarticulate classes with which the dramatists as a body are chargeable must be regarded as a limitation of the range of their art."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the general dislike for the common people some of the dramatists, occasionally, from the earliest times used scenes and episodes representing contemporary country life. In this study the term "country people" includes all who did not live in cities - country gentlemen; villagers, as well as the farmers and servants. Of the great number of plays examined during this period - 1550-1616- only twenty-eight contained country characters.<sup>2</sup> These plays represent the works of nine well known dramatists and six minor and anonymous writers.

The country had four separate classes: country gentle-

1. Cambridge Hist. of Eng. Lit. vol. III p. 416.

2. Shakespeare's works are not included in this list as his plays have been studied from this angle before. Mr. de Rothschild sums up Shakespeare's attitude toward the country as one of "complete and humorous sympathy. Shakespeare's studies of rustic life are many sided and varied couched in a kindly vein." (Shakespeare and His Day. p. 120)

men, yeomen, farmers, and servants. The country gentlemen did not differ in education and refinement, to any extent, from the city gentlemen as illustrated by Frank Thorney,<sup>1</sup> Master Frankford,<sup>2</sup> and Lambert and Serlsby.<sup>3</sup> The yeomen were the boast of England, her best patriots and staunchest defenders. They were not gentlemen but plain good men. They were often well to do, educated their sons at the universities and lived in increasing luxury. George a' Greene<sup>4</sup> and John Carter<sup>5</sup> are vivid sympathetic portraits of English yeomen. A distinct class, strongly divided from the laborer or gentlemen, was the farmer. He could hawk and hunt, attend fairs, was generally superstitious and a great respecter of old customs. This was the type most frequently satirized by the dramatists. The very names given to these farmers are suggestive of their treatment, - Old Plodall, Peter Plodall,<sup>6</sup> Old Banks, Cuddy Banks,<sup>7</sup> Sperantus.<sup>8</sup> The serving men were divided into two classes, servants to gentlemen and yeomen, and farm laborers and tenants. The general Elizabethan treatment of serving men is humorous.

The presentment of the women in these plays largely reproduces actual types, and the way in which dramatists looked upon women. Their position in life and their relation to men was the way of the world and the way of the age. There can

1. "Witch of Edmonton."
2. "Woman Killed With Kindness."
3. "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay."
4. "Pinner of Wakefield."
5. "Witch of Edmonton."
6. "Wily Beguiled."
7. "Witch of Edmonton."
8. "Mother Bombie."

be little reason for doubting a close correspondence between many of their characteristic features of life and on the stage. Greene presents a highly idealized type of country women in Bettris and Margaret. Probably the most popular and common rustic woman type represented on the stage was the Witch - Mother Bombie,<sup>1</sup> Mother Sawyer,<sup>2</sup> The Wise Woman,<sup>3</sup> and Maudlin.<sup>4</sup> Of the dramatists it may be roughly stated, that in not a single one can be found any suggestion of a disbelief in witchcraft itself, even where a fraudulent use of it is exposed or derided.

From these plays evolved a type which I have termed Rustic drama. It differs from the pastoral in being a realistic portrayal of real country men rather than an idealistic representation of imaginary people. The setting is likewise an English village or rural home instead of an artist's dream of Arcadia or some other visionary place. Considering the general Elizabethan dislike for the country our wonder is that eight plays were written which may be classified as Rustic drama.

1550 Gammer Gurton's Needle	Stevenson
1590 The Pinner of Wakefield	Greene
1593 The Two Angry Women of Abington	Porter
1603 The Woman Killed With Kindness	Heywood

1. "Mother Bombie."

2. "The Witch of Edmonton."

3. "The Wise Woman of Hogdson."

4. "The Sad Shepherd."

	1606 Wily Beguiled	Anon
	1623 The Witch of Edmonton	Dekker
p.	1633 A Tale of A Tub	Jonson
p.	1640 The Sad Shepherd	Jonson

Seven common characteristics were found in these plays: country setting, rustic hero and heroine, realism, simple language, paucity of theme, wholesome humor and comic rather than tragic experiences.

The origin of Rustic drama may be defined as an innate interest in humanity which from time to time found expression in these pictures of country life. Little development of interest in lowly life was found in the plays. The earliest treatment was naturalistic and unsatirical, but coarse. The tendency to idealize was introduced with Lyly, who reflects the influence of the pastoral drama. Greene also idealized country people, but instead of the pastoral type of idealization, he idealized real country life. The highest points of interest and of sympathy for the country folk were reached in the two rustic tragedies: "The Woman Killed With Kindness", the first democratic tragedy in Elizabethan period, and "The Witch of Edmonton". On the other hand the weaknesses and the follies of the rustics were satirized by Jonson and Middleton.

Democracy was not popular in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; the divine right of kings still prevailed, hence rustic drama did not and could not become known as a species, nor did it have any influence upon the

other forms of drama. It is merely a term to designate those unusual, exceptional, occasional plays which recognized country people and treated them as human beings with feelings, thots, and experiences similar in kind, if not in degree, to the feelings, thots, and experiences of people of higher rank. The idea of real brotherhood was as yet unknown. So the dramatists' want of sympathy for country life reflects the spirit of the times, the lack of democracy, the limitation of the Elizabethan age.

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